

How to Effectively Use a Slideshow

First things first:

- Who is your **audience** and what is the **tone** of your topic?
 - Use these questions to help determine what kind of **template** you should choose as well as what kind of **slide transitions** and **text/picture animations**. Try to choose templates with colors that create an appropriate tone. (For most applications, you can also create your own template - do not feel locked in by what the application offers.) The slide transitions and text/picture animates can be customized individually and should also be appropriate to the tone of the information and audience. For example, if you are giving a presentation on the Holocaust, you probably do not want a bouncy animation for text, but rather a fade or dissolve.
 - The audience and tone also should influence your choices for other media, such as **pictures, music, and/or video**. Multi-media presentations engage the audience, but you also do not want it to be overwhelming. A balanced mix of facts (words) and pictures, music, and/or video will engage without distracting. Choose pictures that tie to your topic with little explanation needed, or stop to explain them if need be. Pictures/videos/songs that don't seem to fit distract the audience.

Content:

- **Title slides:** you should have a title slide that encompasses the gist of the presentation that you project as your audience enters the room. You do not necessarily need to read the title; trust that your audience is capable of reading.
- **Slide organization:** you do not want to put lengthy sentences on a slide. Your audience will spend more time reading than listening or will ignore it all together. You want to write in phrases (2-4 words) that highlight important facts or evidence. Including quotes is fine, if the quote is powerful enough to merit reading as opposed to merely hearing. Also, do not put long lists of information on slides - your audience will tune out. 2-4 important factoids/pieces of evidence is perfect.
- **Documentation:** for a formal, academic presentation, you can use parenthetical citations in the slides themselves and create a bibliography page that follows the required format (MLA or APA). At the very least, you should include the bib page; the parenthetical citations are up to the individual teacher. Create your bibliography like you would for any research paper: include all sources, whether you quote from them or not.

Speaking using a slideshow:

- **DO NOT READ** from the slides. You know exactly how this feels when people read to you - it's boring and borderline insulting. Consider your slides an outline, or a **skeleton**, much like you would have to develop an essay or research paper. Your speech/presentation gives the skeleton **flesh** and develops your ideas. Your audience will see the bones but your spoken words will give it its form and soul (purpose).
- Use the titles of individual slides in **transitional statements** rather than simply read them. Reading them creates a fragmented rhythm and distracts/disrupts your fluency.